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NSC STAFF FOR RICK WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/31/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)  
SUBJECT: GOE'S MIXED SIGNALS ON INTERNATIONAL NGO  
REGISTRATION

Classified By: Classified by DCM Stuart Jones for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) Summary: Internews, the U.S.-based media reform NGO, appears to have secured GOE approval to finalize its registration in Egypt, paving the way to start work with independent Egyptian media, supported by USAID. IRI, which continues to defer appointing a new country director, is taking a wait-and-see approach. Meanwhile, NDI is making an overture directly to the reformist wing of the NDP leadership, in hopes of influencing the GOE to allow NDI to resume and expand its work. End summary.

12. (SBU) Internews, which has long-standing links with Egyptian media organizations, told USAID staff on August 30 that the MFA was finalizing its registration. Internews applied for registration in 2004, and had been running occasional seminars and workshops on a fly-in/fly-out basis, but USAID's award of a direct grant to Internews in 2006 for new and expanded activities made the need for formal registration more pressing.

13. (C) In a recent conversation with MFA Assistant Minister for Americas Salama Shaker, the DCM had sought an update on the overall registration issue and urged prompt resolution of the Internews case. Shaker agreed to look into it, but offered ambiguous signals on NDI, at one point saying that NDI could "somewhat" resume activities, but needed to "stay below the radar." The DCM pressed Shaker for clarification, but she declined to elaborate.

14. (SBU) Visiting IRI staff told emboffs in late-August that IRI was pleased to be invited to the NDP's party conference September 19-20, and planned to send a mid-level Washington representative. IRI's Country Director position remains vacant.

15. (SBU) The NDI Country Director confirmed that NDI is also invited to the party conference, and said that she plans to attend. NDI board member Sam Gjedensen (former Democratic Congressman from Connecticut) might attend in lieu of NDI President Ken Wollack, who will not be available. NDI believes that working closely with the NDP, for now, may be the best way to secure its position. To this end, the NDI Country Director will also seek a meeting with Gamal Mubarak to make the case that the NDI's non-partisan technical assistance to legal Egyptian parties would provide great benefits to the NDP as it prepares for the 2007 Shura Council elections.

16. (C) In a meeting August 24 with the DCM and emboff, Gamal Mubarak advisor Mohammad Kamal was lukewarm on the chances for prompt registration of IRI, NDI, and IFES. In an August

30 meeting with the Ambassador, Gamal Mubarak referred the Ambassador's inquiry about the institutes' registration status to the MFA. Gamal noted that the NDP was looking forward to the institutes' attendance at the party conference, but would not be drawn out on their legal status.

17. (C) Comment: Notwithstanding the positive news on the Internews registration, GOE signals on the more controversial cases of IRI, NDI, and IFES have been distinctly mixed. The NDP's invitation for the institutes to attend the September 19-21 party conference is welcome, but may mean waiting on the registration issue. The institutes should consider taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the invitations from the NDP to attend the annual conference, ideally by sending senior leaders to attend and making the case that they have something useful to offer.  
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